

# MAYOR'S COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

## AUGUST 17, 2009

### MINUTES – Meeting in Newton City Hall – Cafeteria

**PRESENT:** Rob Caruso (Co-Chair), Girard Plante (Co-Chair), Lucie Chansky, Jeff Hutter, Rosemary Larking, Barbara Lischinsky  
**REGRETS:** Jane Brown, Jini Fairley, Heather Platt, Jason Rosenberg  
**STAFF:** Beverly Droz (Human & Vol. Services), Kathleen Cahill (Planning & Dev.)  
**GUESTS:** None present.

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The meeting was called to order at 6:45pm and chaired by Rob Caruso.

### MINUTES

A **motion** was made by Lucie Chansky and seconded by Girard Plante to approve the minutes from July 20, 2009. The motion was approved unanimously.

### CDBG ACCESS PROJECTS REPORT

This report was submitted to MCPD by email before this meeting for their review. Per usual it is copied here within the minutes. Kathleen Cahill presented the report. Comments are noted after a project.

**Accessible Pedestrian Signals** (Project CD0703C. Expended, \$7,818; Budget balance: \$11,995; CD10-03D, Budget balance: \$6,000). Centre St. and Centre Ave. is a priority intersection; however that is on-hold pending a final decision by the Newton Corner Advisory Committee on VHB conceptual plans. Washington St. and Commonwealth Ave. is another priority intersection. The scope of changes at Washington & Commonwealth includes an upgrade to the existing traffic signal equipment; there is approximately \$65,000 in funds available for this work. If leftover funds are available after the above equipment is installed accessible pedestrian signals will be considered and the Mayor's Committee will be able to weigh in on options (a letter from the MCPD to C. Schuckel is being developed). Other priority locations submitted to traffic engineering include: Washington and Beacon as well as Washington Street by Newton-Wellesley Hospital. The City's contract with Republic ITS is currently expired and awaiting renewal. The new contract is expected to be executed this month!

*Discussion: Kathleen talked with Clint regarding the legal holdup with the contract with Republic ITS. Bev provided an update on our letter to Clint and his response; he'd prefer to meet during day. Barbara indicated that the traffic signal at Arborpoint, which was put in by Arborpoint, is state of the art, and wished similar ones could be used at other locations. The Committee believed that there were \$90,000 in mitigation funds for this intersection when the situation was first reported about two years ago. Bev will look through past minutes to see if she can validate this claim. Lucie brought up Commonwealth Avenue and Grant St; the city is redoing it. Kathleen will look into it.*

**Charlesbank Playground** (Project CD0903C. Budget balance, \$30,000). Project includes the installation of a ramped concrete walkway with metal handrails, designed to complement new play equipment, benches, and picnic tables and allow access through the park.

*It was noted that neighborhood funding is often rotated and projects therefore take a while to finish, sometimes even a few years.*

**Curb Cuts** (Project CD0903G, Expended \$48,879 Budget balance, \$42,255; CD10-03C, Budget balance: \$80,000). Funds were used to complete the following curb cuts: Auburn and Washington (4/widening of island) Mason-Rice (6), Temple and Myrtle (2), JFK Circle (2). Committee earmarked remaining funds for curb cuts on Everett and Gibbs and Sumner and Gibbs in Newton Centre. Construction on these curb cuts will hopefully begin soon!

*As reported previously, it took a while to get neighborhood consensus.*

**Retrofitting Curb Cuts** (Project CD0903E, Budget balance, \$6,000). A list of 7 locations (Homer Street, Beacon St. @ Dalton, Centre Green @ Langley, 1188 Centre Green, 82 Lincoln Street, 100 Walnut Street, 28 Commonwealth St) (19 curb cuts) have been identified by committee members and staff. Project 90% complete; some corrective action needs to take place on several of the completed detectable warnings.

*It was noted that: Jeff took photos of different materials use to construct detectable warnings. Kathleen has been collecting photos and researching materials as well. Engineering is talking to other communities to get information and hopes to develop a city standard.*

**Cold Spring Accessible Route** (CD10-03A, Budget balance: \$36,000) Project includes accessible “L shaped” pathway from parking area to circle where the farmer’s market is held. Project will be bid with other CDBG-R (stimulus) projects this fall and begun Spring 2010.

**Crystal Lake Accessible Pathway** (CD10-03B, Budget balance: \$9,000) Project includes funds for material costs associated with the construction of an accessible pathway along City’s property easement on 230 Lake Avenue. Pre-construction work is being completed throughout July and August; construction begins late August must be complete by mid-October.

**Nahanton Accessible Pathway and Handicap Parking Space** (CDR09-03, Budget balance: \$30,000) Project includes retrofitting park for handicap accessibility through the construction of an accessible pathway and the addition of a van accessible parking space. Project will likely go out to bid Fall 2009.

**Newton Centre Accessible Pathway and Handicap Parking Spaces** (CDR09-04, Budget balance: \$23,500) Project includes construction of an accessible pathway and the addition of two handicap accessible parking spaces. Project will likely go out to bid Fall 2009.

## **SCHEDULE FOR THE CONSOLIDATED PLAN**

Kathleen Cahill gave an overview of what we’ve done for the past months and what the future goals are.

In the spring we held 3 public meetings to invite discussion from residents and City departments about the access needs in Newton. In July, we established the final priorities. This month we are meeting to formulate objective and strategies to meet the access needs we established.

Based on our work at tonight’s meeting, we will present the needs assessment to the Planning and Development Board on September 14. Girard will attend the meeting and represent MCPD as we also meet that evening.

- ✓ In October, we will finalize the application and evaluation criteria for access project applications. In November there is notice of application for access projects.
- ✓ In December, Planning staff will present the objectives and strategies section of the Consolidated Plan to the Planning and Development Board, including access.
- ✓ In January 2010, we will review responses to applicants' access projects and make decisions establishing funding priorities at the January meetings.
- ✓ In March, the Planning and Development Board has a hearing on the entire Consolidated Plan of needs, objectives and strategies.
- ✓ In May, the Consolidated Plan is submitted to HUD.

Due to the high volume of applications we expect to review, we discussed and decided to hear some proposals in December and will schedule two meetings in January on January 10 and January 25, 2010.

### **ACCESS PRIORITIES FOR THE CONSOLIDATED PLAN**

Kathleen presented and reviewed the priorities:

1. **Improvements to public thoroughfares** – curb cuts and accessible pedestrian signals. Staff will work from walking survey developed by the Department of Public Works which focuses on village centers. DPW has agreed to add intersections in need of accessible pedestrian signals to this list so improvements can be completed in tandem.
2. **Improvements to public facilities**
  - a. Accessible signage project
    - i. Signage in the “lobby” at the Housing Authority’s main office
    - ii. Directory and other signage at the Ed Center
    - iii. Directory and other signage at the Newton Free Library
  - b. Automatic door opener at the Newton Housing Authority main office
3. **Improvements to parks and open space** – this includes the following specific priorities developed by the Parks and Recreation staff and the Mayor’s Committee:
  - a. Newton Centre Playground – Pleasant Street
  - b. Cold Spring Park – 1288 Beacon Street Newton Highlands
  - c. Burr Park – 142 Park Street Newton Corner
  - d. Richard McGrath Park (Warren Playfields) - 1600 Washington St, West Newton
  - e. Weeks Field Playground – Locksley Road, Newton Centre
  - f. Crystal Lake – 16 Rogers Street, Newton Highlands
4. **Improvements to non-profit agencies**

Angino Farm:

  - a. Re-grading and repaving access to main barn level to enable wheelchair access.
  - b. Assist in converting the main barn floor to a workshop and community space, including:
    - i. Rebuild floor to become even and reasonably level
    - ii. Installation of two accessible toilet rooms
    - iii. Installation of lift to mezzanine workshop space

Hyde Community Center

  - a. Brigham House – repair walkway, construct curb cut (for drop-off zone), construct patio for accessible patio furniture

## **PROPOSED OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES**

Kathleen noted that the access needs assessments include improvements to public thoroughfares, improvements to public facilities, improvements to non-profit agencies and improvements to parks and open spaces. These are access issues that we've discussed since spring. Kathleen then presented the proposed objectives and strategies to meet these access needs:

### **Public Thoroughfare Improvements**

Objective: To improve access on public thoroughfares, especially sidewalks and street crossings

- Strategies:
- Install ADA compliant curb cuts throughout the city, with a focus on village centers where pedestrian traffic is the heaviest
  - Install audible pedestrian signals at heavily used and dangerous intersections, with a focus on village centers where pedestrian traffic is the heaviest
  - Advocate with the City for the construction of accessible sidewalks on all streets and work in tandem

### **Public Buildings Improvements**

Objective: To improve access to public buildings, facilities and public programs

- Strategies:
- Make the interior of the Education Center and the Newton Free Library more accessible to persons with visual impairments

### **Parks and Recreational Facilities Improvements**

Objective: To improve access to parks and recreational facilities and utilize CDBG funds to implement accessibility projects identified by the Parks & Rec Department

- Strategies:
- Continue to provide funding for additional phases of the implementation of the Newton Centre Playground Rehabilitation and Accessibility Plan
  - Improve accessibility at the Warren Playfields
  - Improve accessibility at Weeks Field Playground
  - Improve accessibility at Crystal Lake

### **Non-Profit Agency Improvements**

Objective: To improve access to nonprofit agency facilities and services

- Strategies:
- Improve accessibility of the programs and facilities at Angino Farm, owned by Newton Community Farm
  - Improve accessibility of the entrance and outdoor space at Brigham House
  - Establish the capacity to fund small accessibility projects for non profits (e.g. signage, door openers, elevator sensors)

Kathleen stated that after we identify and approve objectives and strategies to go along with the access needs, we'll move to the part of the process where requests for CDBG access project applications will be made. Amy Yuhasz pointed out that this is a guide.

Lucie was concerned about the objectives and strategies and there was ongoing discussion to try to clarify and understand everything. Bev told members that this is a framework to support goals. In all management planning you have to establish objectives to support the goals and therefore strategies to support the objectives. This is how the goals, in this case access needs, are accomplished.

Lucie inquired as to whether we had to fund everything that is on the list. Kathleen said that once a department presents, we are able to decide whether or not to fund it. Rosemary asked about limited funding. Kathleen indicated that we can choose which projects to fund and therefore we can choose limited funding options. We added Burr Park and Cold Springs to the strategies for the objective of improving Parks and Recreational facilities.

Rosemary made a **motion to accept the proposed objectives and strategies** with the understanding that the language will be revised to allow for the Committee's comments to be reflected and also allow a latitude of choice. Lucie seconded the motion and **the motion passed unanimously**.

### **Current Components and Evaluation Criteria**

Review of the Current Components of the application for CDBG access funds and the Evaluation Criteria were tabled until the October meeting. The committee thanked Kathleen for her work.

### **Other Locations**

Rosemary brought up the fact that the Police Station has a ramp but the door is not accessible after 6pm. Kathleen indicated that because of regulated traffic, people ring the bell. Rosemary stated that there is no bell. Kathleen said she would investigate it.

Girard stated that there that the curb cut in front of City Hall facing Walnut Street needs to be reconstructed. Kathleen will check it out.

Lucie said that the Education Department is renovating an area behind the building at 100 Walnut Street to accommodate disabled students and she asked whether or not it would be accessible. Kathleen indicated that as she understands it, it will become accessible.

### **CRYSTAL LAKE UPDATE**

Amy Yuhasz from Planning & Development presented the Crystal Lake update. She noted that the Crystal Lake Task Force was established two years ago by the mayor in order to solicit neighborhood input.

Amy distributed 2 maps: (1) Partial demolition with renovation option and (2) New building option. The maps show the very sloped driveway and parking lot to the building and beach (which indicates an approximate 20% slope). The walk down to the pathway to the beach is also very sloped. There is an accessible ramp in the back of the building that zig zags to the beach (as indicated by the blue path on the maps). About a year ago, CPA funds were allocated to purchase 16 Rogers Street and an easement from 230 Lake Avenue.

Amy described the two options: a partial demolition versus a new building. Proposed pedestrian paths are indicated by a blue dotted line on the maps. The red ramp as it is conveyed on the map is for city fire trucks and to get rafters to the beach. The new building option includes reconfiguring the building with a veranda and moving the current steps but there would be similar access and a walkway.

Architectural estimates show that for Option 1, the partial demolition, it would cost \$4 million and for Option 2 with the new building renovations would cost \$4.8 million. Private fundraising is ongoing.

Amy said there will be storage areas for items like the HP beach wheelchair. Lucie asked about HP unisex bathrooms to accommodate the handicapped classes that come. Rosemary asked if it would be open year-round. Amy indicated that there will be heat and that it would be ideal to have other uses year round. Amy will take the comments back and look in to it.

Amy stated that this is a master plan level and there is a lot of room for control because it is a City project. It still has to go out for bids. Rob recalled reviewing the plans about a year ago with Amy and Carol Stapleton. The Committee thanked Amy for her presentation.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Golden Living Center (25 Amory Street)**

Bev recently sent an email to Dave Norton about this location.

Note: Dave Norton emailed Kathleen that he is in the process of researching Arborpoint files and O'Paddy's Restaurant.

### **Police Station**

As Rosemary stated earlier, there is no electric door bell or door; Kathleen will check.

### **Snow Committee/Snow Removal**

Rob spoke with Alderman Scott Lennon who will try to attend our meeting on September 14.

### **Handicapped Parking - Bev reported on 2 locations:**

108 JFK Circle

Mayor Cohen asked for a HP space at 108 JFK Circle and another HP space directly across from it. David Koses explained to Bev that there is an item before the Traffic Council to eliminate all parking on one side of the circle. Therefore there can be 1 or 2 HP spaces but they will obviously need to be on the side of the circle where parking will be allowed. The Committee noted that the location is home to a lot of seniors. Rosemary made a **motion to add two handicapped parking spaces**; Lucie seconded and the **motion was passed unanimously**.

15 Madoc Street

Joseph Behard requests a HP space in front of his house and he requests 2 HP parking signs. His wife is handicapped and can hardly walk. They have a HP placard. He and the nurse have to frequently transport her to doctor and hospital appointments. We do not have knowledge of the area. Lucie agreed to visit 15 Madoc Street to evaluate the need for a handicapped parking space. Hence, this item is tabled until the Sept. meeting.

**Hess Station** - Girard asked if we can ask Dave Norton to visit the Hess gas station on Commonwealth Avenue across from the Marriott Hotel to determine whether or not there is an accessible entrance.

**Announcements-** The MOD training will take place from September 23-24 in Boston.

**A motion passed to adjourn at 8:35 pm.**

**The next meeting will take place on Monday, September 14, 2009.**

Respectfully submitted by Beverly Droz